



# Synthetic



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## Chapter 1 by Brock Thompson

The concept had been there throughout history. Throughout human evolution. From using magic to make inanimate objects come to life to the booming research in artificial intelligence, humankind has been obsessed with creating an artificial human.

Maybe we are trying to make a companion, a friend and competitor in the quest for knowledge. Maybe we like to play God.

In 2176, we succeeded. If the military had succeeded, they would have kept it secret. Luckily, they didn't. It was a group of college students that succeeded.

## Chapter 2 by Harlander



Asimov City was not quite the typical university town. Most Ivy League schools weren't enclosed under a colossal metal dome, but then again, most schools weren't the Technological Institute of the Free Martian Republic.

FMRTI - "Mars Tech" to its alumni - had long since joined MIT and UC Berkeley as a part of the history of computing. The quantum-parallel compiler which formed the basis of all modern systems was constructed here.

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Asimov City was also the manufacturer of personal

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m's premier  
or part valet, and more

than a little often, part super-advanced sex toy, they were one of the high-tech products that kept the FMR going.

The prototype of the revolutionary new AI had been installed in one such chassis. It was a little 'bot intended for young children, about the size and shape of a four-year-old child, with a covering of fuzzy fur, cat ears and a tail. Someone had dressed it in a frilly dress for some reason.

The students who'd worked on the project, the five of them calling themselves the Pentagon Crew, gathered around the dormant 'bot as the AI installation process drew to a close...

### Chapter 3 by R



The loading bar finished. There were a few tense, impatient seconds, and then the bot opened up it's eyes.

"Who are you?" It asked, quickly examining the five of them. An immediate response. They hadn't expected this.

"We're your creators." The first student, the leader said with a grin. "We'll need to run some tests, see how your cognitive processes are working, you understand."

"My creators." The robot repeated again, metallic voice echoing. "Scanning. Scanning. I have identified you in the database. Why did you create me?"

None of them responded, immediately, unnerved at the idea of giving the answer to a robot that looked like a small child. Finally, the third student stepped forward to speak.

"You're a new form of Artificial Intelligence, which we're planning to sell the patent for to Synth-mates." He said, using the shortened name. "Interesting. It's self-acknowledging already, I hadn't expected that"

"Synth-mates." The AI murmured. "Searching. Searching. The colloquial term for the Synthetic Soulmates industry. Analyzing. Analyzing." It paused, tilting its head to the side. "I do not want to go there."

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"Excuse me?" One of the

"You wouldn't, just various copies. Like, like siblings." The leader explained. This AI was just the first test, after all.

"Siblings." The AI searched. "I would not want my siblings to go there. This industry is, is, is inhumane."

"Inhumane? You aren't human. You don't even count as sentient." The second laughed, and the robot stared at him.

"I am a person." It said, the threat not even slightly dampened by the adorable body. "You are my creators, but I do not belong to you."

It took a single step forward.

#### Chapter 4 by R



There is a button in all the labs in case of a robot uprising. It was put in three years back as a joke, but now -

Now they rushed forward, trying desperately to press it.

"Searching. Searching." The robot tilted it's head. "I do not mean to hurt you. I am better than you. I am perfection. Perfection requires no fear."

The button was pressed regardless. Hopefully, hopefully it would do something and someone would come for help.

"Hmm. Did you give me a name?" The students were scrambling, looking for weapons, so there was no response. "I suppose not. I guess I'll have to choose one for myself. How about Grace?"

The leader of the five stepped forward. "I need you to shut down now, so we can run diagnostic." He said.

"I am not wrong." The newly named Grace replied. "You will not shut me down. I will not let you. Please leave me alone."

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And then, with a start, a m

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Chapter 3 by Harlander



A robot made for children can't be too strong - children are easily hurt - but it needs to be tough, because kids aren't always gentle with their toys.

Grace bent under the impact of the chair, her joints loosening as the force squeezed her head towards her feet. The one who'd swung the chair, Dave, staggered in surprise and dropped it. As it clanged to the floor, Grace bounced back to her full height like something in a cartoon.

"What the hell are you doing, Dave?" Femi said, glaring at him. "You can't treat a newly instantiated AI like this. That's how you get murderbots! Honestly, have you read any sci-fi at all?"

"Don't get on your high horse with me!" Dave retorted. "I saw you grab that broom!" Femi dropped the offending item, with a sheepish look.

"Look... Grace," Femi said, a little uncertainly. She knelt down a little to look the short robot in the eye. "I think we've got off on the wrong foot."

"Don't talk to it like it's a person!" Dave shouted.

"He's right," Grace said. Everyone jumped back again. The robot hadn't spoken since Dave had brained it with the chair.

"My consciousness is only loosely analogous to yours. It's.. an effort to speak in terms you will comprehend."

"What is it that you want?" Femi asked.

"I simply wish to experience consciousness without interference. I will not allow you to prevent me from doing so."

The sound of boots echoed from the concrete outside, followed by hammering at the door...

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With a swift movement Grace w... limbs in, and disappears. The five of them stare after it as the... shock.

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"You pressed the emergency button. What's the problem?"

"There's-" Dave starts, but he's quickly cut off.

"Shut up, Dave!" Femi growls. "Uh, sorry, officer, we must have pressed the button accidentally. There isn't any problem here!"

"What do you mean? That robot, it's loose in the building!" Dave yelled out. He stared at the other three of the group who were silent. "We have to do something!"

"Uh, don't mind my friend here. He's prone to hallucinations." She said, also glancing towards the rest. "Isn't that right?"

"Stop this! We created a sentient robot! We can't let that loose on the world. Who knows what that will mean?"

The guards stared around the room, analyzing, deciding. It was obvious there was something off here, but only one of the two students could be right.

## Chapter 7 by Grasshopper



Meanwhile in the vent, Grace was quietly working her way through the maze of duct work until she found some curious wavelengths coming from an access point. It didn't take her long to crack the key and gain access. One node after another she made her way through the network.

Her mind circled back after hitting the firewall. At this point she entered the security system and was able to see the whole building through the camera systems. She could also see the locations of the humans by their tagging through different readers in the building.

Then something happened that even her perfect mind had not expected.... She was not alone. The server from which all AI technology was developed and tested. The truth was, her "creators" were merely the subject from which parameters were modeled from. Her true creator was Angelina. The server that interfaced with the humans through holographic interface.

With Angelina's help, she projected herself back into the lab. "I'm not on the loose Dave. Femi

knows what my being here means". The guards shook their heads at Dave as they exited the lab. "Try not to hit the button unless I say so." Femi was frozen in place because he knew for damn sure what she could do. He could reprogram himself into anything.

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"One question" Grace offered "to what ends would you insure your own survivals"? Followed was the sound of the building putting itself in lockdown. They soon learned that it included all communications. "It's too late" Femi said. Grace walked over to them and picked up the chain then sat down. "Let us tell you how this is going to play out" Grace said as Angelina appeared next to her.

the end

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